

### **Mattie Gayle Cheek**

Mattie Gayle Cheek, daughter of Noah R. Cheek and Martha Marsh Moffitt was born May 27, 1902 in Goldston, Chatham County, NC and died Mar 27, 1958, in Farmville, Pitt County, NC. She married Arch J. Flanagan, Jr. on May 24, 1928 in Raleigh, NC. She and Arch had four children, 2 boys and 2 girls.

Gayle grew up in the small community of Goldston, near the geographical center of North Carolina. She was the 17<sup>th</sup> child of a family of 21 children. Her father was married twice with the first wife, Wincy Smith having 12 children and Gayle's mother having 9 children. Gayle's father, a Confederate Veteran, was a farmer and blacksmith. Her mother's family owned a foundry and she was good at blacksmithing too. In addition she delivered many babies as a midwife in the local community working closely with the local doctor.

After high school, Gayle borrowed \$600 from her sister, Irma and went to East Carolina Teacher College (Eacy Teacy) for a two year degree leading to a "B" teachers certificate. In high school she played basketball but her first love as a sport was tennis. She taught in Farmville and Benson, both in NC. She met Arch in Farmville while rooming in his home. She was teaching in Benson when they were married. She died in 1958 of colon cancer about two years after its detection.

Gayle was active in the Farmville First Christian Church, teaching Sunday school and being active in the women of the church activities. After marriage she lived in the town of Farmville except for a six year period when the family lived on the farm just outside Farmville. She helped with the management of Farmville Freezer Lockers, which the family had an interest in, off and on from 1947 to 1954. Gayle was an accomplished seamstress and as practical as her mother had been. Having been a teacher of younger children, she added a lot to the education of her own children. It was hard for them to get by with much.

Gayle's passions were her family, her church and community affairs. She was an active member of the UDC, (United Daughters of the Confederacy) and was very proud that her father fought in the Civil War. She was also a member of the DAR, (Daughters of the American Revolution) but felt almost any one could qualify for membership. The UDC was a much more selective choice. She loved to tell jokes and listen to them. With four rambunctious children, it was good she had a sense of humor.

One of the most endearing of Gayle's characteristics was her peace making ability. She was the one person in her family anyone could talk with and not feel they would be unduly criticized in any way or taken advantage of. She was a favorite and with good reason. She had much the same reputation in her chosen home town of Farmville as well.